DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 265 430 CG 018 753

TITLE	Keeping Students in School. Dropout Data, Research, and Programs.
INSTITUTION	North Carolina State Dept. of Public Instruction, Raleigh.
PUB DATE	Jul 85
NOTE	61p.
PUB TYPE	Statistical Data (110) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Failure; Attendance; *Dropout Prevention; Dropout Rate; *High Risk Students; High Schools; *High School Students; Motivation; *Potential Dropouts; School Guidance; Student Attrition; Student Needs; Withdrawal (Education)
IDENTIFIERS	*North Carolina

ABSTRACT

This report, compiled by the North Carolina State Board of Education's Office for Dropout Prevention, provides dropout data, reasons for students' dropping out of school, and approaches for keeping students in school until successful completion of their education. Facts and figures for dropout rates of high school and the extended day school program servicing high risk students are presented in graphs and charts. A summary of four research studies examining reasons for students' dropping out is given with material from the studies themselves included. One of the studies described concludes that students most likely not to graduate are children of the poor and poorly educated; these children enter high school without firm direction and with low levels of achievement and patterns of non-success early in their school careers. Many dropouts, asserts another study, feel alienation. Specific recommendations from the other two studies are given which include identifying potential dropouts at an earlier age, and looking at attendance, retention, participation in extracurricular activities, how program choices are made, and how grades are assigned to students (especially minorities) as possible avenues to reducing the dropout rates. A third section (which makes up half the document) describes promising approaches (primarily conducted in North Carolina counties) which contribute to dropout prevention and illustrate the wide range of services and programs needed to meet the various needs of individual students. (ABB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED265430

KEEPING STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

Dropout Data, Research, and Programs

July, 1985

CG 018753

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

√ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

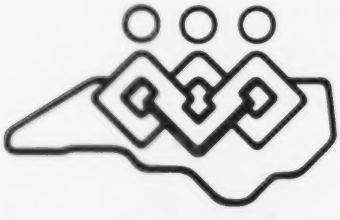
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

E. Brumback

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



Office for Dropout Prevention
Support Services Area
Department of Public Instruction

KEEPING STUDENTS IN SCHOOL

Dropout Data, Research, and Programs

Office for Dropout Prevention
Support Services Area
Department of Public Instruction

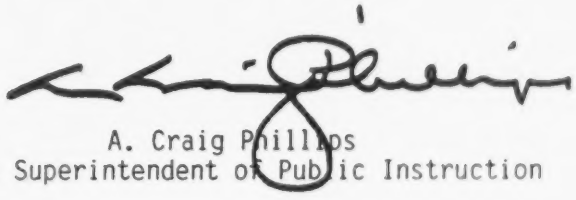
Raleigh, North Carolina
July, 1985

FOREWORD

As today's society rushes into the Information Age, the consequences of dropping out of school - for the individual student and for society - become more and more serious. The fast pace of modern life, not to mention its complexities, demands a level of preparation and an ability to accept changes unparalleled in our history.

The State Board of Education has made dropout prevention a goal for North Carolina. Through the Office for Dropout Prevention, efforts are being made to coordinate the significant work of the Department of Public Instruction and local school systems and communities and to encourage additional initiatives to keep young people in school.

While a higher percentage of our students than ever before is being graduated, significant numbers - an estimated 23,000 high school students last year - are dropping out before graduation. Those dropout data, some of the reasons why students drop out, and some of the promising approaches for keeping students in school until the successful completion of their education are the subjects of this report. Its purpose is to spur thinking and action toward the goal expressed in the title: Keeping Students In School.



A. Craig Phillips
State Superintendent of Public Instruction

Theodore R. Drain
Assistant State Superintendent
Support Services

CONTENTS

		Page
I.	Dropout Data	1
II.	Dropout Research	9
III.	Some Promising Approaches Which Contribute To Dropout Prevention	22

DROPOUT DATA

The facts and figures related to dropping out of school are sketchy, at best. The information presented here does, however, illustrate the magnitude of the problem.

The dropout data for North Carolina's school systems published each year by the Division of Planning and Research, Controller's Office, State Board of Education are estimates, the results of a complex formula used to approximate the number of dropouts. With this formula, the significant numbers of middle grades dropouts are not counted. As reporting becomes computerized in the future, actual numbers of dropouts can be counted for a more complete picture of the situation.

A chart depicts the recent history of the dropout rate for the regular high school and the extended day school in North Carolina, showing the mostly downward trend of the rate. Since the extended day program has a primary goal of serving high-risk students, its dropout rate naturally is higher.

Comparing dropout rates across state lines is extremely difficult since states calculate the dropout rate differently. The chart of graduation rates presented here is one effort to consider each state's relative position in keeping students in school. Many of the southern states, which traditionally have had the distinction, continue to have the lowest rates of graduation. Ironically, although cities are not depicted in this chart, it is in some large urban areas where the dropout rate is highest today.

Estimates by School System of 1983-84
High School Dropouts in North Carolina

LEA	High School Enrollment (excluding Extended Day)	Estimated Annual Regular High School Dropouts		Extended Day Program		
		Number	Rate	Enrollment	Dropout	Rate
Alamance	3733	271	7.3	144	91	63.2
Burlington	2364	121	5.1	54	29	53.7
Alexander	1386	84	6.1	74	31	41.9
Alleghany	553	35	6.3			
Anson	1556	109	7.0			
Ashe	1279	100	7.8			
Avery	945	79	8.4	37	23	62.2
Beaufort	1324	68	5.1			
Washington	1064	53	5.0	157	66	42.0
Bertie	1311	90	6.9	83	55	66.3
Bladen	1780	114	6.4	224	123	54.9
Brunswick	2476	180	7.3	169	41	24.3
Buncombe	7237	449	6.2			
Asheville	1561	119	7.6	187	93	49.7
Burke	3876	306	7.9	102	44	43.1
Cabarrus	4003	266	6.6			
Kannapolis	1472	115	7.8			
Caldwell	4041	386	9.6	137	75	54.7
Camden	411	28	6.8			
Carteret	2258	181	8.0			
Caswell	1231	115	9.3	28	16	57.1
Catawba	3789	228	6.0	215	104	48.4
Hickory	1433	113	7.9	51	35	68.6
Newton	865	64	7.4			
Chatham	1834	124	6.8			
Cherokee	1171	79	6.7			
Chowan	687	31	4.5	89	28	31.5
Clay	378	22	5.8			
Cleveland	2779	149	5.4			
Kings Mountain	1196	78	6.5	70	39	55.7
Shelby	1195	60	5.0	143	57	39.9
Columbus	2476	177	7.1	72	41	56.9
Whiteville	823	54	6.6	96	37	38.5
Craven	3595	346	9.6	113	58	51.3
Cumberland	10113	571	5.6	266	86	32.3
Fayetteville	3177	164	5.2	99	43	43.4
Currituck	640	55	8.6	66	31	47.0
Dare	745	39	5.2	82	28	34.1
Davidson	5081	299	5.9	280	161	57.5
Lexington	1007	85	8.4			
Thomasville	779	61	7.8	48	25	52.1
Davie	1480	91	6.1			
Duplin	2451	189	7.7	93	71	76.3
Durham	5191	349	6.7	156	121	77.6
Durham City	2399	255	10.6	157	110	70.1
Edgecombe	1675	159	9.5			

LEA	High School Enrollment (excluding Extended Day)	Estimated Annual Regular High School Dropouts		Extended Day Program		
		Number	Rate	Enrollment	Dropout	Rate
Tarboro	957	72	7.5			
Forsyth	12077	512	4.2	787	268	34.1
Franklin	1360	99	7.3			
Franklinton	410	28	6.8			
Gaston	9753	717	7.4	401	194	48.4
Gates	539	31	5.8			
Graham	463	49	10.6			
Granville	2132	149	7.0			
Greene	822	70	8.5			
Guilford	7735	418	5.4			
Greensboro	6923	389	5.6	573	291	50.8
High Point	2686	186	6.9	250	101	40.4
Halifax	2072	186	9.0	198	61	30.8
Roanoke Rapids	811	54	6.7			
Weldon	444	44	9.9			
Harnett	3444	245	7.1			
Haywood	2784	196	7.0			
Henderson	2766	200	7.2			
Hendersonville	549	22	4.0			
Hertford	1383	119	8.6	46	30	65.2
Hoke	1226	97	7.9	49	27	55.1
Hyde	335	16	4.8			
Iredell	3003	271	9.0			
Mooresville	778	51	6.6			
Statesville	1076	60	5.6	75	41	54.7
Jackson	1208	69	5.7			
Johnston	4154	289	7.0			
Jones	513	36	7.0			
Sanford-Lee	2170	117	5.4	67	28	41.8
Lenoir	1929	134	6.9			
Kinston	1391	98	7.0			
Lincoln	2678	176	6.6			
Macon	1132	69	6.1			
Madison	928	78	8.4			
Martin	1693	108	6.4			
Mcdowell	2074	179	8.6	106	38	35.8
Mecklenburg	22086	1618	7.3	224	141	62.9
Mitchell	840	75	8.9			
Montgomery	1193	116	9.7	53	42	79.2
Moore	2799	173	6.2			
Nash	3100	234	7.5			
Rocky Mount	1987	131	6.6			
New Hanover	5947	450	7.6	442	229	51.8
Northampton	1357	81	6.0	83	27	32.5
Onslow	4470	273	6.1	277	150	54.2
Orange	1525	133	8.7			
Chapel Hill	1709	48	2.8			

LEA	High School Enrollment (excluding Extended Day)	Estimated Annual Regular High School Dropouts		Extended Day Program		
		Number	Rate	Enrollment	Dropout	Rate
Pamlico	666	49	7.4			
Pasquotank	1585	119	7.5			
Pender	1435	115	8.0	50	21	42.0
Perquimans	529	42	7.9			
Person	1634	95	5.8			
Pitt	3271	246	7.5			
Greenville	1574	65	4.1	145	39	26.9
Polk	469	36	7.7			
Tryon	223	10	4.5			
Randolph	4057	361	8.9			
Asheboro	1209	96	7.9			
Richmond	2601	202	7.8	33	25	75.8
Robeson	3957	350	8.8	148	68	45.9
Fairmont	674	66	9.8			
Lumberton	1302	79	6.1			
Red Springs	464	39	8.4			
St. Pauls	465	30	6.5			
Rockingham	1501	155	10.3	22	14	63.6
Eden	1393	98	7.0			
Madison-Mayodan	840	67	8.0			
Reidsville	1282	95	7.4			
Rowan	4170	301	7.2			
Salisbury	782	51	6.5			
Rutherford	3166	260	8.2			
Sampson	2095	133	6.3			
Clinton	837	45	5.4			
Scotland	2138	210	9.8			
Stanly	2063	153	7.4			
Albemarle	663	54	8.1			
Stokes	2055	120	5.8			
Surry	2591	161	6.2	96	46	47.9
Elkin	336	15	4.5			
Mount Airy	602	29	4.8	39	23	59.0
Swain	514	41	8.0			
Transylvania	1307	87	6.7			
Tyrrell	210	14	6.7			
Union	3719	318	8.6	130	69	53.1
Monroe	867	76	8.8			
Vance	2318	127	5.5	69	44	63.8
Wake	17446	1125	6.4	351	179	51.0
Warren	1064	78	7.3			
Washington	976	36	3.7	60	26	43.3
Watauga	1440	101	7.0	70	31	44.3
Wayne	3831	208	5.4	23	9	39.1
Goldsboro	1414	88	6.2	63	15	23.8
Wilkes	3275	262	8.0	138	52	37.7
Wilson	4031	259	6.4	50	27	54.0
Yadin	1617	114	7.1	78	38	48.7
Yancey	851	47	5.5			

Source: Division of Planning and Research, Controller's Office, State Board of Education

Explanation of North Carolina's Estimated Annual High School Dropout Rates

An estimated 6.9% of North Carolina's high school pupils (or approximately 23,005 students) dropped out of school during the 1983-84 school year. The figures are estimated from information supplied to the Department of Public Education by local school principals throughout the state. Because a significant number of students drop out during the summer months when school is not in session, the annual dropout rate must be estimated. Precise dropout statistics require an individual follow-up of students leaving school prior to graduation to determine their educational status. While some high schools conduct such follow-up studies, the vast majority do not. For purposes of these estimates, a dropout is defined as a student who leaves high school for any reason except death, before graduation or completion of a program of studies, without transferring to another school.

The preliminary estimates of the number of high school dropouts are arrived at as the difference between the size of the graduating class when they were in the ninth grade and their class size upon graduation. The final estimates are obtained by allowing for the average annual combined effect of in-and-out migration, public and private school transfers, changes in non-promotion patterns, and student deaths.

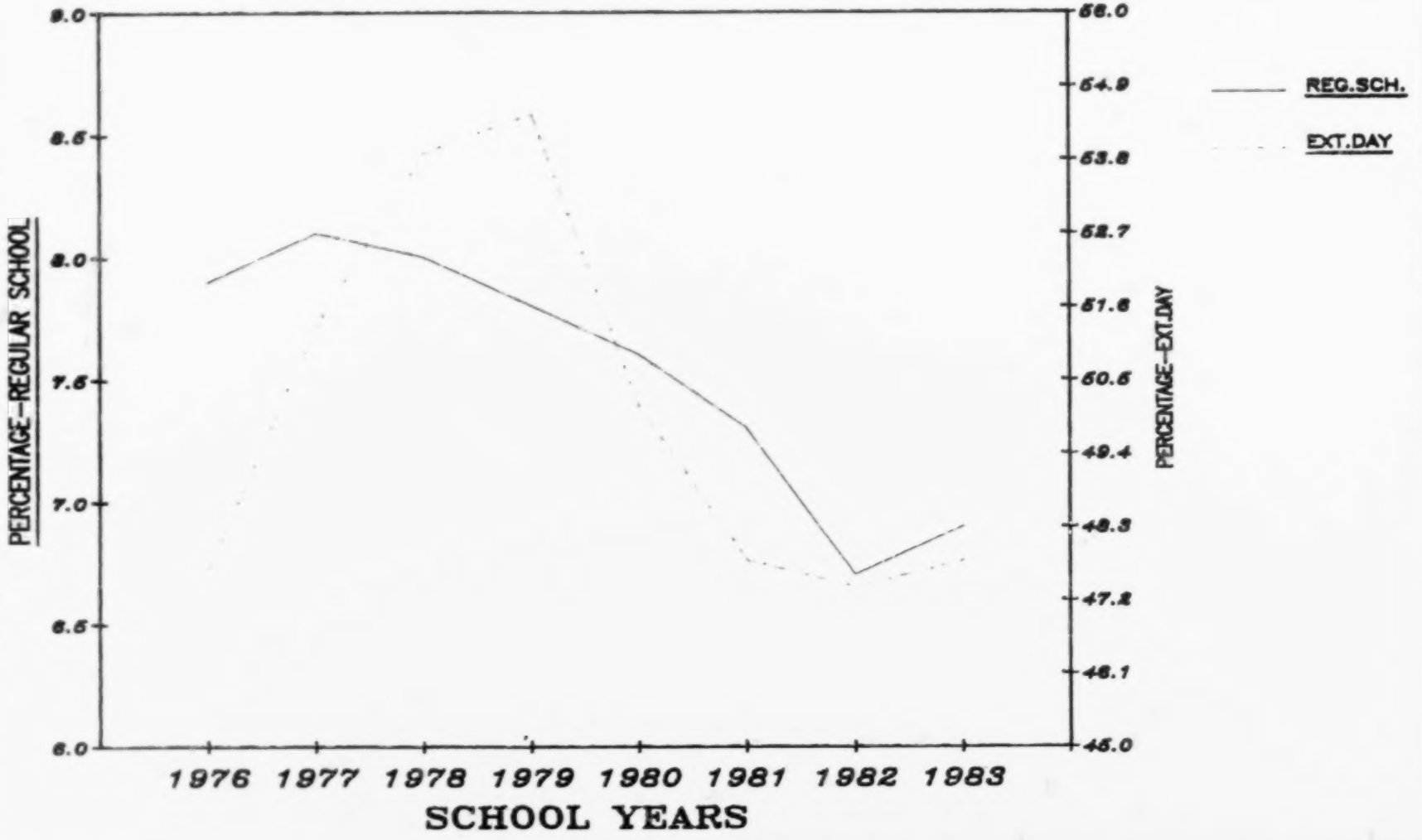
The statistical techniques used to calculate the estimated annual high school dropout rates have been refined through the years, and we are confident that the published figures closely approximate the actual rates based upon the best information available to us prior to publication. A more detailed explanation of the statistical formulas used in computing the estimated dropout rates is available from the Division of Planning and Research upon request.

Care should be taken in comparing North Carolina's estimated annual high school dropout rate to those of other states. Wide variations exist among the states in the methods used to arrive at the published rates.

To calculate the extended day program dropout rate, the actual number of dropouts was divided by the actual headcounts in the program. These figures have <u>not</u> been included with the regular high school dropouts.

Source: Division of Planning and Research

N.C. S.B.E. CONTROLLER'S OFFICE
ESTIMATED ANNUAL PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS DROPPING OUT



PREPARED BY THE DIV. OF PLANNING AND RESEARCH(DROP-OUTS)

Graduation Rate and Rank by State for 1982 and 1983[1]

State	Percentage Rate 1983 (Rank)	Percentage Rate 1982 (Rank)
Alabama	67.4 (43)	67.1 (43)
Alaska	77.8 (23)	71.0 (38)
Arizona	68.4 (41)	72.4 (33)
Arkansas	76.2 (29)	74.7 (30)
California	75.1 (34)	68.9 (39)
Colorado	79.2 (19)	76.3 (22)
Connecticut	77.9 (21)	71.2 (37)
Delaware	88.9 (3)	81.8 (9)
Dist. of Columbia	58.4 (50)	55.8 (50)
Florida	65.5 (47)	65.4 (46)
Georgia	65.9 (46)	
Hawaii	82.2 (14)	84.2 (4)
Idaho	77.9 (22)	76.9 (19)
Illinois	77.1 (26)	74.8 (28)
Indiana	78.3 (20)	76.9 (21)
Iowa	88.0 (4)	85.8 (3)
Kansas	82.5 (12)	80.9 (11)
Kentucky	68.4 (42)	66.9 (44)
Louisiana	57.2 (51)	64.0 (48)
Maine	76.7 (27)	72.1 (34)
Maryland	81.4 (16)	75.6 (24)
Massachusetts	77.5 (24)	75.9 (23)
Michigan	73.4 (36)	72.7 (32)
Minnesota	90.7 (2)	89.2 (1)
Mississippi	63.7 (49)	63.0 (49)
Missouri	76.2 (30)	75.4 (25)
Montana	83.1 (10)	82.2 (8)

State	Percentage Rate 1983 (Rank)	Percentage Rate 1982 (Rank)
Nebraska	84.1 (8)	83.6 (6)
Nevada	74.6 (35)	75.3 (26)
New Hampshire	76.5 (28)	78.3 (13)
New Jersey	82.7 (11)	78.1 (15)
New Mexico	71.4 (38)	71.6 (36)
New York	66.7 (44)	66.3 (45)
North Carolina	69.3 (40)	68.4 (41)
North Dakota	94.8 (1)	87.3 (2)
Ohio	82.2 (13)	77.5 (18)
Oklahoma	79.6 (18)	77.6 (17)
Oregon	73.0 (37)	71.7 (35)
Pennsylvania	79.7 (17)	78.8 (12)
Rhode Island	75.2 (33)	72.9 (31)
South Carolina	66.2 (45)	64.3 (47)
South Dakota	85.0 (6)	83.9 (5)
Tennessee	65.1 (48)	68.9 (40)
Texas	69.4 (39)	68.2 (42)
Utah	84.5 (7)	81.4 (10)
Vermont	85.0 (5)	77.7 (16)
Virginia	75.7 (31)	75.0 (27)
Washington	75.5 (32)	76.9 (20)
West Virginia	77.4 (25)	74.8 (29)
Wisconsin	84.0 (9)	83.4 (7)
Wyoming	81.7 (15)	78.3 (14)
U.S. Average	73.9	72.8

[1]Calculated by dividing the number of public school graduates by the public ninth grade enrollment four years earlier. Graduation rates are affected by population migration and students getting GED's; however, information to adjust graduation rates for these factors is not currently available.

Source: U. S. Department of Education
Office of Planning, Budget, and Evaluation
Planning and Evaluation Service
January, 1985

DROPOUT RESEARCH

The research on dropping out of school fills page after page of scholarly journals, dissertations, and study reports prepared to meet the needs of local school systems. With the importance of staying in school so widely accepted, educators and the concerned public seek answers to questions of why students drop out and what can be done to keep them in school.

In North Carolina, as elsewhere, these issues have been considered through research. Presented here is a summary of four of those research efforts, taken directly from the studies themselves whenever possible. These reports are by no means an exhaustive compilation of research, but, rather, they are illustrative of the work being done to better understand the issue of school dropouts. For purposes of comparison to the North Carolina Public High School Dropout Study, a summary of a similar study from the U. S. Department of Education is also included.

North Carolina Public High School Dropout Study

In 1983, the Division of Research of the Department of Public Instruction completed a research study designed to provide estimates of the magnitude and nature of the dropout problem. Researchers Appelbaum and Dent of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill used a statewide sample of those students who took the California Achievement Test as ninth graders in 1977-78, the class of 1981, in the study. Using school record information and telephone interviews,they gathered data related to dropping out. The study reported that "... it would appear that our best guess is that about 72 to 74 percent of North Carolina public school ninth graders graduate (i.e., receive diplomas or certificates of attendance) from high school within five years, while approximately 26 to 28 percent of such students drop-out prior to graduation" (p. 13). The following two tables include some of the major findings of the study:

Estimated Proportions of Selected Groups Who Fail To Graduate

	Estimated % Who Fail to Graduate
Male	29.9
Female	20.9
American Indian	50.8
Black	26.6
White	24.0
Handicapped	41.1
Parental Education	
8th grade or less	38.1
9th-11th grade	35.8
High School Graduate (only)	23.2
Beyond High School	12.5
Parental Income	
Less than $5,000	37.6
$5,000 - 15,000	27.1
over $15,000	13.8
Curriculum Type	
General	41.7
Vocational	19.1
College Prep	4.9

Telephone Interview Data
(Sample Data - Unweighted)

A. Non-graduates
Number located = 123

Post High School Education

Did you plan to get additional education after graduation?

Yes	18	17.1%
No	87	82.9%
Total respondents	105	

Did you get additional education after graduation?

Yes	59	48.7%
No	62	51.2%
Total respondents	121	

Post High School Training

None	51	45.1%
HS Diploma/Certificate	39	34.5%
Academic	3	2.7%
Vocational/Technical	13	11.5%
Armed Forces Technical	1	.1%
Health/Safety	1	.1%
Other	5	4.4%
Total respondents	113	

Do you plan to get education/training in the future?

Yes	30	26.3%
No	43	37.7%
I've had some already	41	36.0%
Total respondents	114	

Work History

Are you now working?

Full time	71	58.2%
Part time	10	8.2%
No	41	33.6%
Total respondents	122	

Did you hold a part time job during High School?

Yes	66	54.6%
No	55	45.4%

Reasons for Leaving School

Discipline problem	19	17.0%
Health reasons	3	2.7%
Pregnancy	4	3.6%
Family problem	6	5.4%
Poor academic performance	24	21.4%
Economic reasons	13	11.6%
General dislike for school	33	29.5%
Marriage	10	8.9%
Total respondents	112	

% wanting information on adult education and training programs - 43.4%

B. Graduates
Number located = 319

Post High School Education

Did you plan to get additional education after graduation?

Yes	180	58.1%
No	130	41.9%
Total respondents	310	

Post High School Training

None	108	34.0%
College	119	37.4%
Technical	59	18.6%
Vocational	13	4.0%
Ad-vocational	10	3.1%
Health/Safety	3	.1%
Other	6	1.9%
Total respondents	318	

Do you plan to get education/training in the future?

Yes	37	11.8%
No	71	22.5%
I've had some or will continue	207	65.7%
Total respondents	315	

Work History

Are you now working?

Full time	133	44.5%
Part time	66	22.1%
No (includes full time students)	120	40.1%
Total respondents	299	

Did you hold a part time job during High School?

Yes	236	74.5%
No	81	25.5%
Total respondents	317	

Reason for staying in school until graduation

Parental expectation	82	26.6%
In order to get further education	86	27.9%
To get a good job	124	40.3%
I like going to school	16	5.2%
Total respondents	303	

% wanting information on adult education and training programs - 12.8%

The conclusions of the study are these:

> On the basis of having conducted the study and traced the problems involved, it seems reasonable to conclude that a study can indeed be executed and can give meaningful results. The data seem to indicate fairly conclusively that for those students who were in ninth grade in 1977-78 approximately 28% failed to graduate. Those students who seem most likely not to graduate are the children of the poor and poorly educated. They seem to enter high school without firm direction (elect a general curriculum), with relatively low levels of achievement, and exhibiting a pattern of non-success early in their school careers (i.e., poor attendance, high failure rates, and unusually high levels of disciplinary problems). (p.19)

Burlington School Dropcut Research Project

The study conducted by the Burlington City Schools posed three questions:

1. What are the identifiable characteristics exhibited by students who leave school before graduation?
2. What are the perceptions of North Carolina dropouts concerning why they left school before graduation?
3. What can be done in the schools to alleviate the dropout problem and prevent students from leaving school before graduation?

Researchers developed a two-part design: an interview survey of Burlington's dropouts and a longitudinal study of these dropouts' school records.

The study reports characteristics of those studied. Among the notable findings:

- 26% dropped out in ninth grade, 32% in 10th, 31% in 11th, and 11% in 12th.
- The month of July had the highest percentage of dropouts.
- 52% were 16 when they dropped out.
- 40% had below average aptitude while 52% had average. In achievement, however, 61% for reading and 68% in math were below average.
- 19% had been retained in grade 1 and 14% in grade 2.
- The fathers of 81% of the dropouts were unemployed, unskilled, or semiskilled.
- The parents of 90% of the dropouts had not graduated from high school.

In interview, an extensive list of questions was asked of the dropouts. Among the results:

- 39% were unskilled and 33% were unemployed.
- 59% of those employed were satisfied with their jobs.
- 55% had had no further contact with any school.
- "Lack of interest", listed by 25%, was the most commonly given reason for dropping out.
- 59% felt that leaving school was the wrong thing to do.

- 50% now see a high school education as very necessary for finding a job.

- 42% said English was the subject that gave them the most trouble.

- 40% liked math best, and 18% enjoyed vocational courses most.

- 62% said that they dropped out for other reasons and that school could not have been improved to meet their needs.

- 36% said that they began thinking about dropping out in middle school while 58% said high school.

- For 33% of those surveyed, no one in school talked with them about staying.

- The parents of 47% of the dropouts never attended school functions.

- The parents of 70% encouraged them to do well in school and stay in school.

- The interviewers felt that 66% of the dropouts regretted leaving school.

Out of this research, the project developed a specific dropout prevention model. Its intent is to .."prevent feelings of alienation, to prevent the potential from developing to the extend that a student drops out." As described in its introduction:

> [t]he model is designed to begin identification and intervention of dropout potential at the elementary school level with careful placement and recognition of needs, and to continue through the middle and high school levels with program modifications which insure for each child an equal opportunity for success in a meaningful course of study.

Scotland County Dropout Study

The Research Committee of the Scotland County Schools undertook a study in 1982 "to gather and analyze descriptive data on those students who dropped out of the Scotland County School System during the 1981-82 school year ...[in the] hope that these study results [would] serve as a 'stepping stone' toward reducing the drop-out problem which currently exists in [the] school system." At the time, Scotland High School's drop-out rate was 12 percent and a total of 236 students dropped out of the county's schools during that year. Quoting from the summary and findings of the study (pp. ii-vi):

By the time they left school these students were "behind" their peers in terms of scores received in reading, math, and language on the California Achievement Test.

Almost three-fourths (70.8%) of the drop-outs were enrolled in the general curriculum, fourteen percent were enrolled in the college preparatory program while less than 10 percent were enrolled in vocational and other programs.

Of perhaps practical importance was the finding that 82.6 percent of the students who dropped out were involved in NO school activities other than required studies. Another finding apparently having predictive value was the fact that more than one-half (52.9%) of the drop-outs had been retained at least once and 5 percent had been retained three times (retentions were most frequent in grades 1, 2, 8, 9, and 10). Most of the drop-outs (65.7%) were from homes with two parents present.

Findings

Because of a lack of interview data on drop-outs and data on students who stayed in school (control group), many of the variables of this study were compared to test scores. As the reader might guess, there were significant relationships between student aptitude and test scores in reading, math, and language skills. In this respect one might tend to conclude that there are no differences in this respect between drop-outs and other students. Further examination of the drop-outs, however, reveals that a strong relationship holds only for White drop-outs. The correlation is weaker for Blacks and American Indians. No such differences were apparent in the relationship between reading scores and mathematics scores. While we would not suggest predicting drop-outs with aptitude scores because of the racial differences, we might conclude that drop-outs do equally well (or equally poorly) in reading and mathematics.

Although signficant, the relationship found between parents' education and performance as measured by test scores was not considered strong enough to warrant consideration as a predictor of dropping out. This weak finding is in fact good news. We desire to find strong relationships among those factors which can be impacted by actions by school personnel.

A more disturbing finding was the relationship between retentions and performance (test scores). These results were low and negative. This leads us very cautiously to the suggestions that for our sample the fact of retention may not have been effective in improving the performance of the students who later dropped out (the subject of retention may well be worthy of further attention).

For the total group there was a moderately strong relationship between program type (college prep, vocational, general, and other) and scores. In general,one could conclude that, like other students, the higher achieving drop-outs were likely to be found in college preparatory programs. This finding deteriorates somewhat when race is also considered, suggesting the pitfalls of attempting to make predictions from only one variable.

Finally, two of the minor findings proved quite interesting. For White drop-outs there was a strong relationship between school grades and test scores. With only a few students having enough complete data for analysis, the same relationship was weak for Black drop-outs and in the negative direction for American Indians. Further data suggests that while the grades assigned to boys might be predicted from test scores, the grades assigned to girls are practically independent of the test results (this result is also based on small numbers of students).

Conclusion

The most significant conclusion of this study is to point to the need for addressing drop-outs in terms of a study comparing them with students who achieve a diploma and/or gathering information more directly from the students themselves. There are, however, some tentative suggestions for administrators who prefer not to wait on further studies. Administrators should look at attendance, retention, participation in extra curricular activities, how program choices are made, and how grades are assigned to students (especially minorities) as possible avenues to reducing the drop-out rate.

A Study of Dropouts in Education Region VI

In a dissertation completed in 1983, Dr. William B. McMillan, Jr. conducted a study to "identify factors that are related to why students drop out of school before they receive their high school diplomas." He studied graduates and dropouts from Education Region VI, using school records and interviews with dropouts. His conclusions and recommendations from the study are excerpted below:

Conclusions

The major conclusion drawn from this study is that the identification of factors that cause students to drop out of school is extremely complicated and often frustrating. Statistical analyses show definite relationships between students' backgrounds and characteristics and the tendency to drop out of school but do not, of course, indicate cause and effect. Responses of the dropouts through personal interviewing revealed that cause is more related to emotional and humanistic factors. It was further revealed that negative peer association was highly influential in causing students to become less interested and motivated toward making positive efforts toward succeeding in the school environment. This study also revealed that some students are at a point in their educational careers that formal schooling might not be in their best interest. However, this investigator feels that educators should and must do all within their power to salvage all who are salvagable. Administrators were not looking at the curriculum within their schools to make certain that all students were engaged in activities that allowed growth for the most advanced as well as those behind in the basic skill areas. Administrators were not adept in assessing the teaching/learning methodologies for the purpose of determining if teaching styles were impacting negatively on particular populations of students. Neither were administrators and/or teachers utilizing test scores from annual or diagnostic testings to best place students in classes or skill groupings to significantly impact on skill needs. The results of this study, nevertheless, warrant the general conclusions that follow:

1. Inability to do well on tests and to pass coursework is definitely a factor in the dropout problem.
2. Potential dropouts are more involved in discipline problems than their counterparts who graduate from high school.
3. There is a strong tendency for dropout students not to join school clubs and enroll in college preparatory curriculums.
4. Potential dropouts believe that the move from the elementary to the secondary school is from a warm and secure environment to a less warm and more complicated environment. They are especially concerned that students who need remediation and guidance are not being served well enough at the secondary school level.

5. There was not enough counseling or support at school or at home to help prevent students from leaving school before graduation.

6. In the main, the dropouts are still struggling to find their "place in the sun." Ironically, most of them believe that education will assist them in finding that "place."

7. There was a strong feeling that peers were influential in motivating students to drop out--especially as students reached age 16 or were behind in achievement.

Recommendations

Recommendations include suggestions for additional study as well as for viable pilot efforts to decrease the dropout rate in North Carolina. A thorough, in-depth study is needed to determine the emotional and psychological variables that are related to the dropout problem. It is not surprising to learn that dropouts score lower on achievement tests or pass fewer courses than graduates, but the effect of these two factors on students' self-esteem and their decision to drop out is far too unclear. The effect of providing potential dropouts with a more relevant curriculum should prove to be a most worthwhile investigation. In addition to these studies, there is an urgent need for well-conceived, planned, and financed pilot efforts which are designed to reduce the dropout rate. Such pilot efforts could include such efforts as parent and community involvement, peer remediation and counseling, and cooperative work-study programs.

Further recommendations that need consideration are administrators must begin at a much earlier grade level--possibly first grade, to identify potential dropouts. This can be accomplished by scrutinizing student achievement and student behavior and implementing support programs to make improvement in these identified areas; that administrators, teachers, and parents must exercise diligence in getting all students involved in extracurricular and/or cocurricular activities beginning at the junior high level; and that school systems should consider placing ninth grade students with high school so that they have a better knowledge and understanding of what secondary school is all about. Hopefully, this will net those students in transition from junior high to senior high whose potential to drop out is high.

National Dropout Research

The data file of the National Center for Education Statistics of the U. S. Department of Education yielded the following information:

DROPOUT RATES OF HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES IN 1980

Background Characteristics	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
	Dropouts as Percent of Sophomores			Sample Size		
Total	13.6%	14.7%	12.6%	28,119	13,905	14,214
Race/ethnicity:						
White	12.2	13.0	11.5	18,545	9,162	9,383
Black	17.0	20.3	14.1	3,712	1,721	1,991
Hispanic	18.0	18.1	18.0	5,039	2,589	2,450
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.1	3.5	2.7	426	213	213
Socioeconomic status:						
Low	17.4	17.8	17.1	7,057	3,143	3,914
Middle	9.0	9.6	8.3	11,836	5,822	6,014
High	5.2	7.0	3.2	5,876	3,141	2,735
Unknown	31.6	32.3	30.9	3,350	1,799	1,551
Self-reported grades:						
Mostly A's	2.9	2.0	3.5	9,507	4,148	5,359
Mostly B's	8.1	7.8	8.4	11,559	5,553	6,006
Mostly C's	18.5	18.1	19.1	5,976	3,524	2,452
Mostly D's	42.5	41.7	44.1	834	547	287
Self-reported school program						
Academic	4.0	4.5	3.6	8,831	4,144	4,687
General	12.9	12.7	13.0	11,359	5,608	5,751
Vocational	15.1	16.9	13.2	5,119	2,622	2,497
Community type						
Urban	18.9	20.8	17.0	6,384	3,080	3,304
Suburban	11.8	12.5	11.0	13,760	6,799	6,961
Rural	12.8	13.6	12.0	7,975	4,026	3,949
Region						
Northeast	11.3	13.4	9.0	6,282	3,092	3,189
North Central	12.0	12.2	11.7	5,720	2,808	2,912
South	15.2	16.4	14.0	11,068	5,455	5,613
West	16.6	17.0	16.3	5,050	2,550	2,500
Type of School						
Public	14.5	15.5	13.6	24,611	12,200	12,411
Catholic	2.3	3.2	1.6	2,616	1,167	1,449

Reasons Cited By 1980 Sophomore Dropouts For Leaving High School Before Graduation

	Total	Total	Male White	Minority	Total	Female White	Minority
				Percent			
School-related							
School was not for me	33.1%	34.8%	45.6%	14.8%	31.1%	34.1%	24.9%
Had poor grades	33.0	35.9	38.4	31.2	29.7	30.0	30.0
Couldn't get along with teachers	15.5	20.6	19.8	22.0	9.5	10.2	8.1
Expelled or suspended	9.5	13.0	12.3	14.3	5.3	6.3	3.2
Didn't get into desired program	6.1	7.5	4.7	12.8	4.5	4.2	5.0
School grounds too dangerous	2.3	2.7	2.9	2.2	1.7	1.1	3.1
Family-related							
Married or planned to get married	17.8	6.9	7.6	5.5	30.7	36.4	19.2
Had to support family	11.1	13.6	9.3	21.5	8.3	7.1	10.6
Was pregnant	10.9	--	--	--	23.4	20.5	29.2
Peer-related							
Couldn't get along with students	5.6	5.4	4.7	6.6	5.9	6.0	5.7
Friends were dropping out	4.6	6.5	6.7	6.0	2.4	2.7	1.7
Health-related							
Illness or disability	5.5	4.6	4.6	4.7	6.5	5.3	9.0
Other							
Offered job and chose to work	19.5	26.9	28.4	24.1	10.7	9.7	12.8
Wanted to travel	6.8	7.0	7.3	6.5	6.5	8.5	2.4
Wanted to enter military	4.3	7.2	6.7	8.3	.8	.6	1.1
Moved too far from school	3.6	2.2	2.2	2.2	5.3	5.2	5.5

SOME PROMISING APPROACHES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO DROPOUT PREVENTION

Just as there is no one reason why students drop out of school, there is no one way to keep them in school. The greatest hope for dropout prevention lies in a commitment to a wide range of services and programs which meets the various needs of individuals.

We know some of what we can do to encourage students to stay in school, but we are still learning. And in the midst of trying new possibilities, we must not forget the impact that a single caring person can have on a student.

The programs presented here are only a sampling of the kinds of programs that may contribute to dropout prevention. The description of each program is excerpted directly from materials provided by the program wherever possible; and, otherwise, the information which was provided is summarized. This is not a comprehensive list, nor even a representative presentation of all the promising programs either in North Carolina or throughout the country. These programs do illustrate, though, the commitment that is needed in program and policy to help young people stay in school.

Also included are brief descriptions of some of the major types of dropout prevention programs found in schools around the state. The availability of these and similar programs varies widely from school to school.

For further information about these programs, please contact the Office for Dropout Prevention. Future publications of the Office for Dropout Prevention will feature other programs. Readers are encouraged to recommend programs for later reports.

Major Types of Dropout Prevention Services In North Carolina's Schools

Extended School Day Program

This educational program is carried out during the extended day as an extension and expansion of regular school services and activities available through a comprehensive high school. The program serves students who have dropped out of school, potential dropouts, or students who need courses not available to them during the regular day because of course overloads, scheduling conflicts, or other factors. To make available the appropriate facilities and services, including library, laboratory, and media equipment, the program is located on existing high school campuses whenever possible. Regular teachers may be employed to work additional hours or additional staff may be employed on a part-time basis. Instructional material and supplies are provided just as to students during the regular school day.

Dropout Prevention/Job Placement Centers

This program identifies and serves JTPA-eligible economically disadvantaged potential school dropouts ages 14 and older. The purpose of the center is to develop and implement an education and work plan for each identified student. Services include remedial education, counseling for education and employment, employability assessment, training in preparation for work, and part-time jobs if students need jobs.

Basic and Vocational Skills Program

This program, established by the 1983 General Assembly, combines remedial instruction in the basic skills with introductory hands-on and orientation experiences in vocational education for under-achieving students in grades seven and eight. Specific goals include providing a comprehensive instructional program to keep these high-risk students in school, identifying and correcting their learning deficiencies in the basic academic skills, providing a broad range of introductory vocational skills, and providing an introduction to the world of work, good work habits, and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Vocational Resource Center

The program provides supportive services to all disadvantaged and handicapped students who cannot succeed in vocational education because of deficiencies in basic education that are related to specific vocational competencies. Each center provides supplemental instruction and services to students and curriculum and instructional resources to teachers. Its goals are to: 1) develop and implement individualized instruction; 2) satisfy the learning needs of students, according to their learning syles, rates, and abilities; 3) provide a setting where students progress at their own pace with needed time on task; and 4) provide alternative evaluation strategies to determine student progress. The individual needs of students are met through a coordinated program planned cooperatively with center personnel, vocational and special education teachers, and other appropriate instructional personnel.

Special Vocational Program

A special vocational program is designed solely for participation by handicapped and disadvantaged students in various program areas. The purpose of this program is to provide a learning environment in which students can develop job entry skills. The goals and objectives of special programs must be consistent with the goals and objectives for regular vocational programs. Special programs may be established for disadvantaged or handicapped students who cannot succeed in a regular vocational program even with supportive services. There are three types of special vocational programs: 1) programs within regular vocational skill development programs, 2) programs designed to prepare students to enter regular vocational education programs, 3) and co-operative vocational education programs for special needs students. The co-operative program is a joint effort of school, home, business, and industry to provide students with on-the-job training.

Work-Study Program

This program serves severely economically deprived students, providing the opportunity for paid work within the school for at least one hour each day. The goal is to provide income to assist the students in staying in school.

In-School Suspension

Suspension from school may result in students becoming involved in more trouble and getting further behind in their studies. This program keeps in school those students whose behavior would normally result in their suspension or expulsion from school. The program attempts to reduce this disruptive behavior, and students are assigned to the program by the principal or the principal's designee. Students receive classroom instruction as well as counseling, these services being provided by specially trained teachers and counselors.

Special School-Within-A-School

This program is a special purpose program within the regular school such as a teenage pregnancy program, an alternative learning center, or a special tutoring program.

Alternative School or Optional School

The program offers an alternative learning approach for high school education. The program is often targeted to dropouts and potential dropouts. It is located generally in a setting of its own, off the existing high school campus, in an attempt to create an environment more conducive for learning for capable students who have demonstrated that they cannot make satisfactory progress in the traditional school setting or cannot return to the regular day school. The program differs significantly from the regular high school experience. Its characteristics include: reduced student/teacher ratio; individualized instructional program; strong guidance component; individual attention to the student's school problems; general and occupational education; co-operative on-the-job training; personal, social, educational, and vocational counseling; and preparation for the competency test.

Operation SPELL - Alexander County

Operation SPELL [Success through Prevention and Educational Leadership for Learners] is a multifaceted, comprehensive, total school system approach to reducing school drop-outs and improving attendance. In addition to dealing with immediate student needs, the emphasis is on prevention--programs and practices have been devised to prevent students from opting to quit school. The purpose of Operation SPELL is to develop positive student attitudes and performance by helping students learn responsibility to self, school and society.

Operation SPELL is a comprehensive series of strategies for K-12 students who are not achieving or functioning in a way beneficial to themselves and those around them. The over-all purpose is to decrease the incidence of alienation among youth, staff and the community. SPELL seeks to: 1) develop a comprehensive methodology for identifying potential drop-outs, 2) provide identified students with increased access to desirable social roles, 3) reduce negative labeling of identified students, 4) improve student attendance percentages and reduce drop-out rates, and 5) provide a framework for a total system approach designed to be a model for implementation for other systems in North Carolina.

Five specific strategy areas have been implemented to meet these goals. The first, system-wide organization/coordination, relates to the hiring of a drop-out prevention counselor to work with all participants in Alexander County. The second involves instructional programs for identified students, especially in the areas of study skills and basic skills development. The third area involves student participation through peer group and adopt-a-student programs. The fourth relates to parent involvement through system-wide parent seminars and special interest meetings. The final area is that of community involvement - an Alexander County Dropout Prevention Task Force has been formed, with programs and other strategies developed by the Task Force to obtain community involvement and awareness.

Operation SPELL has produced dramatic results in Alexander County. Many students have been reached, community awareness and involvement have been neightened, and over 2,000 parents have participated in parenting seminars held at each school.

A number of specific approaches have been taken in each of those strategy areas. A dropout prevention coordinator is responsible for planning, consultation, coordination of the activities of the Task Force and also has some direct service responsibilites with high-risk students at the junior high and high school levels. Recognizing the critical importance of early intervention, another counselor works fulltime in the elementary schools. The need for additional counslors to work with high-risk students is great. The school system focuses its efforts on

particular students through the use of the potential school dropout identification form (a copy of which follows this narrative). The form was developed within the school system through research and experience and is available for the use of teachers in all grades. One of the first major tasks of the Dropout Prevention Task Force was their support of a special countywide focus on the issues related to dropping out through Youth and Family Awareness Month. During this special month, a number of activities were undertaken including proclamations from Taylorsville and Alexander County officials, a series of newspaper articles on the issue of dropout prevention, and a series of parenting seminars held at schools throughout the County.

Alexander County hopes to continue and expand these efforts in the coming year. The program will continue to coordinate all efforts to keep students in school, such as the Dropout Prevention/Job Placement Centers and other efforts throughout the community. Among the new activities will be the implementation of a peer discovery program, through which high school juniors and seniors will receive leadership and peer counseling training to serve elementary schools.

ALEXANDER COUNTY SCHOOLS
POTENTIAL SCHOOL DROPOUT FORM

Name of Student_____ Grade Level_____ Date_____

eferring Teacher_____ School_____

Identified exceptionality (if appropriate)_____

Listed below are characteristics of potential school dropouts. Please check the appropriate column box for each characteristic. In addition, check the appropriate column for the characteristics you think are significantly impacting on the student's potential to be a school dropout. At the end of each section is a space for you to write pertinent comments.

I. FACTUAL CHARACTERISTICS

School:

1. Irregular attendance and/or frequent tardiness.

Number of Days	Absent/	Tardy
First 9 weeks	_____	_____
Second 9 weeks	_____	_____
Third 9 weeks	_____	_____
Fourth 9 weeks	_____	_____

2. Failure - School Years

Number school years retained_____

Retained in current grade __Yes__No

3. Student lacks basic skills necessary for success.

A. Check appropriate areas where basic skills are deficient:

___ Reading ___Comm. Skills

___ Writing ___Mathematics

___ Spelling ___Other_____

_____

B. California Achievement Test Scores

Composite percentile_____%

C. I.Q. Test Score_____

4. Failure - school subjects.

Number of school subjects student is currently failing_____.

Teacher Comments: (Items 1-4)_____

Family:

5. Educational level of parents below high school level

A. Did father graduate from high school?

___Yes___No___Information Unknown

B. Did mother graduate from high school?

Yes No Information Unknown

6. Family patterns of dropping out of school.

A. Number of brothers/sisters in family_____.

B. Number of brothers/sisters dropping out of school:

___Brothers___Sisters___Info. Unknown

7. Miscellaneous family characteristics

A. Are parents divorced?
___Yes___No___Information Unknown

B. Does child live in a one parent household?
___Yes___No___Information Unknown

C. Does child live with a stepfather/ stepmother?
___Yes___No___Information Unknown

D. Does child live in family situation other than with parents (grandparents, foster care, etc.)?
___Yes___No___Information Unknown

E. Is there a history of frequent family moves/changes in school?
___Yes___No___Information Unknown

F. Is the child's family currently receiving economic assistance from government sources (food stamps, AFDC, etc.)?
___Yes___No___Information Unknown

Teacher Comments: (Items 5-7) _____

_____

OBSERVABLE CHARACTERISTICS:	OCCASIONALLY OBSERVED	FREQUENTLY OBSERVED	UNOBSERVED AND/OR NOT APPLICABLE	SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM
School				
1. Performance consistently below potential.				
2. Pattern of disruptive/aggresive behavior.				
3. Poor study/work habits (attention span, test-taking ability).				
4. Little or no participation in extra curricular or special interest activities.				
5. Poor self-concept (withdrawn, lack of friends, feeling of not belonging, etc.)				

Teacher Comments: _____

_____

Family	OCCASIONALLY OBSERVED	FREQUENTLY OBSERVED	UNOBSERVED AND/OR NOT APPLICABLE	SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM
6. Parents not educationally supportive of their child.				
7. Parents not educationally supportive of their child's teacher/administrators.				
8. Unhappy family situation (neglect, abuse, emotional upheaval, lack of discipline, minimal family solidarity)				
9. Few family friends.				

Teacher Comments: _____

_____

Personal/Peers				
10. Friends not school oriented (friends not in school, former dropouts).				
11. Friends not approved by parents.				
12. Alcohol/drug abuse.				
13. Physical health problems (chronic illness, obesity, physical deformity, pregnancy, etc.)				
14. Mental health problems (depression, mood swings, etc.)				

Teacher Comments: _____

_____

List any additional information not covered in this form _____

_____

_____

_____

Edenton-Chowan County Alternative School

The Edenton-Chowan Alternative School is a separate school, designed as a positive option for students who for one reason or another have not been successful in the regular school environment. Instruction is personalized, counseling is provided, and there is an emphasis on treating every student with respect. As stated in the school's handbook, each student's responsibility is "...to put forth a sincere effort every day towards the improvement of [the] ability to speak and listen, to read and write, to recognize and appropriately express feelings, and to set goals and work cooperatively for [their] achievement." Students may either return to the regular high school for their senior year to be graduated there, or they may receive their diploma from the Alternative School.

The behavior code of the school includes both clearly stated rules and explicit consequences for violations. The techniques of assertive discipline are used in dealing with student behavior. The academic expectations are also made clear to students. A contract signed by student, parent, and school representative spells out many of these requirements.

There is a strong vocational emphasis at the Alternative School. In the Introduction to Vocations class, students spend three days on the job and two days in the classroom each week. The three days of volunteer work during the regular class time help to reinforce what is being taught in the classroom. Students are placed at job sites as closely related to what they plan to do after graduation as possible.

The Edenton-Chowan Alternative School stresses the involvement of students as a way of growing and enhancing self-esteem. The students themselves helped to refurbish their school building as the program began, and students continue to take on collaborative programs which offer many opportunities for making positive contributions to school and community.

Columbus County Interagency School Discipline Program

In early 1982, the superintendent of schools in Columbus County appointed the members of the county's School Discipline Task Force. In addition to the superintendent, the members included: a member of the Board of Education, a principal, teacher, parent, student, school social worker, guidance counselor, school psychologist, judge, county commissioner, mental health professional, social services director, minister, chief court counselor, and sheriff. The responsibility of the task force was to develop and implement a plan of action involving the entire community to improve discipline among students in Columbus County.

In its plan the task force identified the following problems:

1. That the number of formal and informal suspensions, dropouts, and status offenders was 360 during 77-78 school year.

2. That there seems to be a lack of community wide awareness concerning the problems of discipline in the Columbus County School System. There is a need to implement a community education program in this area.

3. That Law Enforcement, School Administrators, Juvenile Court Officials, Mental and Social Services seem to lack a common and shared understanding of their various roles in dealing with the problems of school discipline in Columbus County. This lack of shared expectations has led to conflict during the past years over such issues as what are appropriate referrals to juvenile court from the school system and the appropriate roles of school officials and law enforcement in investigating status offenders and/or suspension risks in the schools. There is a need to develop inter-agency agreements which clearly define these roles.

4. That an analysis of the children referred by teachers to school administrators as discipline problems indicates that significant numbers of these children have contributing problems which may partially explain their discipline problems. (i.e., many students are abused or neglected, many have learning disabilities, mental retardation, and/or drug and alcohol problems.) There is a need to increase teacher awareness and ability to recognize these problems.

5. That many referrals made by teachers to school administrators are the direct result of poor organization, planning and management on the part of the teacher. There is a need to help teachers in understanding and implementing assertive discipline.

6. That the Columbus County School System needs a review of its existing discipline policy to insure that similar discipline problems are not treated and processed differently from one school to another.

7. That the occurrence of teenage pregnancy appears detrimental to the social, mental, and educational development of youth in Columbus County.

To deal with those problems, the task force set these objectives out of which its strategies for action grew:

- To review and develop a discipline policy for Columbus County Schools by 9-30-82.

- To provide opportunities for teachers to gain skills in organization, planning, and management.

- To formulate a plan to reduce the number of discipline problems, suspensions, expulsions, and dropouts in Columbus County Schools as compared to the five previous years (1977-82).

- To provide parenting classes for members of the community. Specifically orienting these toward parents who have problem seventh-and eighth-grade children.

- To formulate a plan to reduce the number of status offenders, youth-at-risk, and delinquent youth in Columbus County as compared to the five previous years (1977-1982) by December 30, 1982.

The impact of this school-community approach to discipline continues to be felt. Through planning, goals have been set and realized. Through cooperation, task force members and others have seen greater success in working with young people.

Note: Discipline is one of a number of issues closely related to the problem of dropping out. The Columbus County project is one of nine pilot programs of the Statewide Interagency School Discipline Program, a joint program of the Governor's Crime Commission and the Department of Public Instruction. Others are Washington City, Sampson County, New Hanover County, Alamance County, Union County, Iredell County, Northampton County, and Buncombe County. The premise behind each of these programs is that school discipline is a community problem, that the schools cannot do the job alone.

Cumberland County New Horizons Program: Vocational Education for Special - Needs Youth

The New Horizons Program is offered to identified handicapped and disadvantaged students, enrolled in secondary education, who are in need of special or support vocational services. The program is a systematic approach to vocational education for special needs students.

Introduction to Vocations is a tenth-grade course designed to assist handicapped students in making career choices and planning their vocational training. Students enrolled are introduced to the school's vocational courses and are assessed in the areas of vocational interests, abilities, and aptitudes. The course consists of four vocational mini-courses and an assessment center. The students rotate from one mini-course to another each grading period, receiving seven weeks of classroom instruction and two weeks of vocational assessment in the assessment center. At the completion of the course, summaries of the students' classroom performances and their vocational assessment results are assembled and used to aid them in selecting courses for the eleventh and twelfth grades. One unit of credit is awarded to those who successfully complete the course.

The Vocational Lab is a facility equipped and staffed for the purpose of providing instructional reinforcement for disadvantaged and handicapped students who need assistance to succeed in regular vocational courses. Students must be approved by school-based committees upon referral by a regular vocational teacher or the lab teacher. Participants may attend the lab for a full school year along with a regular vocational course or on a temporary basis, according to their individual needs. The lab's key role is to supply services to the student's regular vocational courses. In addition to assisting students with tasks assigned by the regular vocational teachers, the lab's staff provides individualized instruction in related areas of vocational reading, communication, writing, math, tool use and work-related machines. This instruction is offered through units emphasizing daily living skills. The facility is also used as a vocational assessment center. One unit of credit is awarded to students enrolled for the full year. The lab's staff utilizes a variety of instructional techniques to meet each student's learning style.

The Job Training Course is a cooperative effort between the Jobs Training Service Center and the Cumberland County School System to blend resources and perspectives in meeting the vocational needs of handicapped students. This two-year course is designed to serve the special needs of these students who cannot succeed in regular vocational courses which utilize the cooperative method of instruction. Classroom instruction emphasizes pre-employment training, job development, development of appropriate work attitudes and simulated work experiences. The primary, two-fold purpose of the course is to develop employment skills and provide on-the-job training to allow students to practice the skills acquired through classroom instruction. One unit of credit is earned

by students completing the course's classroom requirements. Students participating in a minimum of 400 hours of on-the-job training will earn an additional unit of credit for a total of two units. Summer employment and an incentive pay plan are also available to students who qualify. The course is success oriented and designed to meet the individual learning style of each student enrolled.

The Career Training Course is designed to provide special vocational services to disadvantaged students who cannot succeed in a regular vocational course which utilizes the cooperative method of instruction. Students must be 16 years of age, have transportation, parents' or guardians' consent, and be approved by a screening committee to enroll in the program. Emphasis is given to concepts of self-analysis, self-improvement, goal setting, selecting a career and succeeding in it, development of work habits and attitudes conducive to job success, and functioning as an informed citizen. Individualized instruction is incorporated into the program with emphasis on vocationally related math and language skills. Classroom instruction is correlated with on-the-job training under teacher supervision. Students must work a minimum of 400 hours to receive one unit of credit. An additional unit of credit is awarded to those completing the classroom requirements.

These four components become an integral part of these students' high school experiences. The staff are committed to developing students' abilities to their fullest potential and to increasing their chances of becoming contributing members of society.

The following staff are required for the New Horizons Program:

- Introduction to Vocations - Four certified vocational teachers and one vocational evaluator involved one period a day.

- Vocational Lab - One vocational teacher certified in the disadvantaged/handicapped areas and one instructional aide employed full-time.

- Job Training - One vocational teacher certified in the disadvantaged/handicapped areas employed full-time.

- Career Training - One vocational teacher certified in the disadvantaged/handicapped areas employed full-time.

Inservice should be provided to the staff in the areas of vocational assessment, individualized instruction, club activities, cooperative educational techniques, and community services available to special needs youth. In addition, an advisory council should be established.

Granville County Classroom Management and Assertive Discipline Program

Bringing together aspects of a number of different theories and methods, particularly effective teaching, research classroom management, and assertive discipline, the Granville County Schools have sought to enhance the climate for learning. The program stresses the importance of preventing problems from arising or escalating in seriousness and, as a result, serves as a dropout prevention program. In practice, the program prevents as much failure and misbehavior as possible through effective teaching and classroom management strategy and then deals assertively and effectively with that which occurs anyway.

The program assumes that academic achievement, student self-esteem, and appropriate student locus of control are of equal importance in defining outcomes of "effective schooling." A central theme is student locus of control: students are taught to accept internal responsibility for their outcomes, rather than depending on endless and reactive external contract.

Preventive management in the classroom involves working with time, people, and materials to achieve the tasks of instruction reflecting educational goals, maintenance of order and the rights of all, and positive human relations. Teaching, management, and discipline are all interrelated. Canter's assertive discipline principles stress that teachers and students have rights, that no student has the right to prevent the teacher from doing his or her job (teaching) or to prevent students from doing theirs (learning). All students can learn, more or less quickly, to be responsible for their own behavior and to make better choices.

The program is tailored to meet the needs of each school. Hawley Schools, with grades five through eight, is one of those schools. Here, the MAIN Idea has four components:

- Mini-lessons set the pace at the beginning of each period. Brief and simple assignments are written on the board for students to complete while teachers take the roll by checking seats.

- Assertive discipline defines the rules and regulations and stresses internal control (preventive discipline) rather than external control (punishment).

- In-school suspension is the consequence of misbehavior. No longer is Br'er Rabbit thrown into the briar patch (sent home) for skipping school.

- Notice for good behavior ranges from happy notes for parents to simple thank-you's from teachers when students meet their expectations.

The data demonstrate clearly the impact of the program. After a year with the program, eighth graders recorded test score gains over one year of two years, two months in reading and mathematics and two years, three months in language. Corporal punishments dropped from 345 in 1979-80 to 0 in 1982-83. Suspensions dropped from 151 to 24 in those years. Teachers found that lesson plans that formerly required a full class period were no longer sufficient: when discipline became a part of the curriculum, more instructional time became available.

Staff development is a key to the success of this program. Changing old patterns of action and attitude takes time, effort, and knowledge of alternatives. The program and the teachers implementing it in their classrooms must have the strong support of their principals. The support of parents and the community and the adoption of the concept of shared parent-school responsibility for the student's learning and behavior are also important.

In the Granville County program, the school psychologist has had a central role. The program has offered an opportunity for the school psychologist to contribute to the enchancement of the schools in a number of ways, including the development of the model, in-service training, and consultation.

New Connections - Lenoir County

Recognizing the relationship between substance abuse and other problems such as suspension, delinquency, and dropping out, the Lenoir County Schools and the Lenoir County Mental Health Center's substance abuse program have developed and implemented a prevention program called New Connections.

The New Connections Program is based on the belief that primary prevention of social and behavior problems is accomplished through ongoing processess providing opportunities for individuals, small groups and organizations to increase: 1) knowledge and awareness of personal and collective potentials; 2) skills necessary to attain those potentials and; 3) creative use of resources to the end that all people have the ability to effectively cope with typical life problems and recognize, reduce, or eliminate unnecessary or debilitating stress. Secondary prevention is characterized by the early identification and intervention into these problematic behaviors.

The planning stage involved students, teachers, and administrators from the schools and the substance abuse education staff from the mental health center. Students were used to determine the validity of a survey tool regarding vocabulary and timing. They also participated in the experimental phase of the program, evaluating the effectiveness of the program content as well as the length of the program required to produce optimum results. Health teachers, guidance counselors, and principals participated in an ongoing subjective evaluation of outcome, sharing ideas regarding alternative methods and innovative approaches to dealing with identified high-risk students.

The outcome of this planning process resulted in the current program consisting of weekly primary prevention classes for all eighth-grade students in one middle school; twice weekly primary prevention classes for all eighth-grade students in a second middle school; weekly primary prevention classes for all ninth-grade students in one high school and; twice weekly secondary prevention groups for identified high-risk students grades nine through twelve. Mental health staff is reponsible for all the primary prevention components. Mental health staff and the counselor in the Alternative School of Opportunity, an in-school suspension program, jointly instruct the high-risk group component. A linkage system has evolved between the middle school and high school program, as well as the primary prevention classes, Alternative School of Opportunity, and the high risk group. Individual consultation with students, teachers, administrators, and parents emphasizes personal management alternatives and referrals to community resources.

The New Connections Program is currently staffed by three individuals: a part-time substance abuse education supervisor and a full-time substance abuse education specialist, both employed by the Lenoir County Mental Health Center and a part-time Alternative School of Opportunity counselor employed by the Lenoir County School System.

Approximately 80% of the two mental health employees' time is spent providing chemical abuse primary prevention education services to students and teachers in the school environment. Duties in this area include:(1) weekly experiential classes with all eighth-and ninth-grade students, in three schools; (2) consultation with school administrators, teachers, and guidance counselors; (3) twice weekly group meetings with identified high risk students; (4) screenings and consultations with students and/or parents for potential referral, involving local community resources; and (5) annual evaluation of program impact. The remaining 20% of the time is spent promoting a better understanding within the community of chemical abuse problems by making presentations to parent groups, civic and professional groups, churches and other community organizations, and fulfilling administrative duties including program planning.

The Alternative School of Opportunity Counselor is a full-time employee of the school system, with only part-time involvement in New Connections. Duties relating to the program include:1) individual consultation with students, teachers, administrators, and parents; 2) individual and group counseling with students referred to the Alternative School of Opportunity and; 3) twice weekly meetings with identified high risk students in a small group setting with the substance abuse education supervisor.

Planning by the program staff consists of working closely with the agencies involved toward meeting individual, system, and community needs. Program objectives and strategies are evaluated and revised based on these needs.

The program includes a number of objectives. Among these are:

- to instruct program participants in the area of communications skills using experiential education techniques;

- to impact academic self-concept, or the student's belief in his or her own abilities to be successful in a major life task, by teaching goal planning and decision-making skills using behavioral techniques in an experiential setting;

- to impact the degree of pressure felt to engage in chemical-using behavior by teaching peer/authority pressure resolution skills with experiential methodology and alternative behaviors;

- to reduce the rate of suspension and expulsion among participants by teaching desicion-making skills and assisting students in making responsible life choices; and

- to reduce the rate of dropouts for program participants by teaching goal planning and assisting students in examining alternatives to learning the educational system.

The mental health center, the school system, and the county's community-based alternatives fund support the program. Interagency cooperation is considered a key to the success of the program.

Data from the program show a need to begin the prevention and intervention efforts at an earlier point. Future plans call for adding the seventh grade to New Connections.

Mecklenburg County Community Committee on Dropouts and Truancy

A community study committee to review dropout and truancy problems in Mecklenburg County was convened in the fall of 1983 under the joint sponsorship of the Council for Children and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.

The impetus to form such a committee came as a recommendation of a previous study of the Mecklenburg County Juvenile Justice System conducted by the Council for Children. Primary findings of this study were as follows:

1. Forty-nine percent (49%) of the sample of court-involved youth had dropped out of school prior to completing high school;

2. Seventy-seven percent (77%) of that sample of dropouts were below the age of 16 and thus were in violation of the State Compulsory Attendance Law;

3. Many of the youth had records of poor school attendance prior to dropping out.

The committee, composed of community leaders who represented widely varying fields, was charged to conduct a comprehensive study to determine the extent to which there is a cycle of excessive absenteeism, truancy and school dropouts in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System. The committee was directed to issue a report of primary findings with specific recommendations for the community and the school system. The purpose of its report was (1) to identify the problem and its magnitude and (2) to recommend strategies to prevent and remediate the human and economic potential lost when students are unable to master basic academic or job skills and do not complete high school.

The Community Study Committee on Dropouts and School Truancy was formed in December, 1983 and spent from December, 1983 to July, 1984 gathering data, analyzing findings and developing recommendations for prevention, intervention and remediation of the problems of chronic absenteeism, truancy and unsuccessful completion of high school in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

Its findings were as follows:

1. There is no clear community definition of the role and responsibility of the high school program. As expectations of standards for high school graduation increase, the committee found no clear consensus as to whether it is the responsibility of the public schools or the community to develop programs to serve as safety nets for students who do not complete high school.

2. Approximately one out of every four students who enter the ninth grade will not successfully complete high school.

3. Current state-imposed methods of reporting dropout figures are misleading the public about the extent of the problem.

4. Many students are never identified correctly as dropouts because of the cumbersome accounting procedures now utilized by the pupil accounting system of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.

5. Males are twice as likely to drop out as females.

6. Black males are twice as likely to become dropouts as white males.

7. A significant increase in school truancy and excessive absenteeism occurs as students make the transition from elementary school to junior high school.

8. Student dropouts peak in the tenth grade. This is another siginificant transition year as many students reach their 16th birthdays at this time.

9. There is no comprehensive community plan for the identification, follow up and case management of each student who is lost from the school system. (There is a program jointly sponsored by CPCC and CMS that provides follow up of some students, but this program focuses on dropouts who are 16 years or older.)

10. The number of students who successfully complete a high school program is increasing. In 1950, one out of two students (or 50%) completed high school. In 1975, 68% of students who entered ninth grade completed school. Our sample population projects that 77% of the students who entered ninth grade in the fall of 1983 will graduate from high school in June 1987. (This represents a projected attrition rate of 23%.)

The recommendations from the committee's report are presented below:

As a result of eight months of study, the committee offers both wide ranging and specific suggestions. These are included in the body of the main report via broad, general recommendations. However, the committee offers two which are, in our opinion, of major importance.

First, we recommend that the County Commission develop a community-wide committee to determine the role and responsibility of the school system and of the community in responding to the needs of dropouts.

Second, we recommend that the public school system maintain more accurate information about student absenteeism and dropouts and use aggregate information to evaluate policies and administrative regulations in order to develop additional programs to serve appropriately the needs of potential dropouts.

On the pages that follow, the committee outlines a number of specific action recommendations:

1. The Mecklenburg County Commission should appoint a community group to define the parameters of school responsibility and community responsibility for youth who do not complete high school successfully. As policies for high school graduation become more stringent, there is the potential that the number of dropouts might increase. This committeeshould monitor school attendance and dropout patterns and encourage the development of systematic links between school and community programs. The mandate of the community group should include responsibility to:

- Encourage appropriate community agencies to assume responsibility for developing additional programs to meet the needs of students who do not complete a regular public school program successfully.

- Explore state and local funding for such programs at the same per student rate received by public schools for students in attendance.

- Review the Interagency School Discipline Project for potential implementation in Mecklenburg County.

- Convene appropriate community agencies to develop a specific plan for use and coordination of agency services.

- Review existing programs in our community and in other communities and to recommend those that are effective as intervention agents in the tragic cycle of absence, truancy and dropout for expansion or initiation.

- Encourage the Charlotte- Mecklenburg Schools to work with local community agencies to develop a plan based upon the existing CMS/CPCC Dropout Project for quick and routine follow up with each dropout.

- Request the Chamber of Commerce to form an action council to examine strategies that the business community can develop to provide employment and job training for dropouts and/or potential dropouts.

2. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction should be encouraged to maintain more accurate information about students who accumulate excessive absences, are truant or who drop out of school. This information would include the current status of individual students who accumulate excessive absences, withdraw or become inactive, as well as accurate data on groups of students who accumulate excessive absences, are truant or who drop out of school. Current methods of reporting data are misleading and do not provide an accurate indication of the scope or reason for the problem. At all grade levels, steps should be taken to:

- Monitor classroom teacher maintenance of the register to insure proper coding of absences and consistency in following the school system policy on attendance.

- Consolidate system policies and procedures on excessive absences related to course credit and truancy as well as withdrawal procedures.

- Require schools to develop specific, routine reports on excessive absence, truancy and withdrawals/dropouts at specific checkpoints during the school year and to submit those reports to appropriate CMS administrative officials.

- Modify the existing Computer Data Processing System so that Student Data Information will differentiate more accurately between students (regardless of age) who are inactive due to out-of-system transfers and students who withdraw from school entirely.

3. The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools should develop strategies to encourage early intervention in the excessive absence, truancy and dropout cycle. These strategies would include routine assessment of the impact of school board policies and administrative regulations on the successful completion of high school by students enrolled in CMS. We recommend that CMS:

- Assign one administrator or one administrative department the responsibility for reviewing data accumulation and storage and for monitoring statistics accumulated. That administrator or department then would recommend appropriate changes in administrative regulations or programs to the superintendent.

- Develop a system of additional rewards to reinforce positively good student attendance.

- Identify "at risk" sixth graders and involve teachers and principals in developing specific intervention strategies. Data indicate a significant peak in poor attendance as students enter the seventh grade.

- Develop plans to reorganize traditional secondary counseling, social work and psychological services to provide personnel specifically trained and assigned to work with "at risk" students.

4. The Charlotte - Mecklenburg Schools should increase the options of students who are involved in the cycle of excessive absence, truancy and noncompletion of high school by developing additional programs which will retain a higher percentage of students in the public school program. We recommend that CMS:

   - Continue to develop the enrollment of vocational preparation classes as an alternative program for potential dropouts.

   - Review the self-contained program at Cochrane Junior High for concepts that might be expanded to similar secondary programs.

   - Review, to modify and to enhance the current Extended Day Program and the CPCC High School Completion program for possible expansion.

   - Expand current after school enrichment programs such as the Dilworth Elementary School model.

   - Develop programs to use technology (example: CPCC ABLE Project) to provide remediation for underachieving students.

   - Review new changes in Vocational Education programs after the first year to assess the impact of the changes on high risk students.

   - Initiate a training program for school staff designed to assist them with early dropout identification and to develop human relations skills and appropriate curriculum for more successful intervention.

School and community are now following up on those recommendations through a number of strategies. To implement the first recommendation, the Mecklenburg County Commissioners have established the interagency Ad Hoc Committee on School Dropouts. That committee is reviewing information and coordinating activities in an effort to define the parameters of school and community responsibility for dropout prevention. School system committees are implementing the other three recommendations. The Internal Committee on Pupil Accounting is seeking a more accurate system of gathering dropout data. The Committee on Dropout Intervention Strategies is seeking ways to identify high-risk students early and to intervene before problems become too serious. A resource manual will assist those working on early intervention. A third school system committee, the Committee on Optional Programs for Dropouts, has as its purpose increasing options for students who are in danger of dropping out.

Northampton County
Ministers' Council for Education

In Northampton County, ministers have joined together to take a leadership role in keeping students in school. Through the Ministers' Council for Education, they are addressing issues related to dropping out of school. Working with the ministers are a number of educators, county agency representatives, and concerned citizens who are committed to the same goal. The mission of the council is stated in the following way:

- Increase community awareness of the dropout problem in Northampton County, its prevalence, consequences and implications
- Identify potential dropouts
- Recover dropouts
- Offer support to keep students and/or get dropouts in school
- Actively recruit and train volunteers
- Develop and coordinate student services

The Council links education, church, community, and agency resources to provide a continuum of services for dropouts and those students who are potential dropouts.

The Council works through a number of subcommittees: 1) truancy program - works individually with dropouts and potential dropouts to see that they are involved in either the regular or extended day school; 2) school-based committee - receives referrals of potential dropouts and recommends steps to assist the students; 3) statistics and information committee - assures that the Council has full accurate data and information on issues to guide its planning and action; and 4) community involvement network - matches potential dropouts with community volunteers. The school system's health coordinator serves as staff to the Council.

The Council began its work by receiving training in active listening to enhance the ability of the members to assist potential dropouts and dropouts. One of the strengths of the Council is the willingness to become involved individually with high-risk students, to share with students the importance of completing their education, to meet the individual needs of students, including locating part-time jobs or finding appropriate clothing for them.

A major emphasis for this year and the coming year is an awareness program to combat the problem of adolescent pregnancies, certainly a factor related to dropping out for large numbers of young women. Another important project sponsored by the Council is the most improved student awards. At end-of-year programs, a certificate for second through sixth and a trophy in grades seven and above was awarded to a student from every class in the county. The criteria were improved self-esteem, attitude, citizenship, and academic performance.

Washington City Schools Extended Day Program

The Washington City Extended School Day Program provides an alternative for those persons who for economic, psychological, academic, or various other reasons are not responding in a positive way to programs at the regular high school. The Extended Day Program is a total comprehensive high school program, but it is not intended to compete with existing school programs or to shorten the time required for high school graduation. First priority in recruitment is given to persons who have dropped out or are on the verge of dropping out of the regular day program. A variety of funding sources, including vocational education and the federal Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), support the program.

The program was developed and implemented to meet the needs of students on an individual basis. The flexibility of the program, which is incorporated within the regular school day through 8:00 p.m., allows students to have alternative schedules to meet their personal needs. Individual assessments and evaluation of aptitudes and interest of the students together with extensive counseling and direction by Extended Day staff provide a more structured and individualized plan of action for students to continue their education.

The Extended Day Program is well integrated with the regular school day program. Extended Day students are offered most of the same extracurricular activities as regular day students. The regular and extended day program share the same facilities and teachers, which tends to blur the distinction between the two programs and aids the overall integration of the programs.

The program benefits from a highly committed, energetic staff. Administrators as well as instructors work evening hours to ensure that the extended day program enjoys the same management benefits and commitment as the regular day program.

Potential dropouts from the program are identified early. If a student misses classes more than three consecutive days, teachers are required to contact the administration immediately. Administrators notify Extended Day staff who immediately visit the student's home and consult with the student and parents regarding the health and enrollment of the student.

Flexibility and accessibility to the program are facilitated through an open door policy that allows dropouts to enroll in school at any time during the school year. Also, with mutual agreement of the principal, assistant principal, Discipline Committee, and the Extended Day director, a day student may enroll if he or she has been suspended or expelled or wishes to transfer into the evening program.

A ninth-grade option offers students who have failed the ninth grade the opportunity to attend Extended Day Summer School and night classes the following school year. Upon completion of the required numbers of units, a student may return to day school as a junior. This option allows students to re-take failed subjects while also taking new courses for credit towards the tenth grade.

Courses which are not offered at night, such as Junior R.O.T.C., physical education, and driver education, are available to be taken within the regular school day by Extended Day students. Vocational skills training courses offered to students include masonry, carpentry, and plumbing. Guest speakers who come in periodically increase interaction with the community. In addition, the Extended Day program has an excellent working relationship with the local office of the Employment Security Commission and credibility in the business community by referring job-ready students for successful job placements within area businesses.

One specific resource offered by the local office of the Employment Security Commission is its Job Club Program, funded through JTPA. When students are assessed as job-ready, they are dismissed from class for a week and participate with peers in a job-readiness program offered by the Employment Security Commission. Peer support and constructive criticism are key elements of the Job Club. The Job Club provides job developing skills, interviewing skills, and job placement for 16 to 21-year-old youth. Upon completion of training, Job Club participants continue to report to the Employment Security Commission for job referrals once a week.

In addition, Washington High School's Job Placement Center is available to JTPA-eligible students. The job placement counselor is a valuable asset in identifying 14 and 15-year-old potential dropouts who need some modification in schedule and educational program to ensure school success.

The Extended Day Program is an integral part of the efforts of the Interagency School Discipline Task Force. The Task Force made reducing absenteeism and dropouts its goal for the first year of operation and achieved an 18% drop in absenteeism and a 25% dropout reduction. Those same goals continue and a new, related goal of reducing drug abuse is being undertaken through a school-community approach.

High School in the Community - New Haven, Connecticut

New Haven's High School in the Community is one of six options in the city's schools of choice program. HSC is a small, innovative alternative to the traditional high school and is designed to provide students and their parents with a choice of learning environments within the public school system. The school program is highly personalized, seeking to improve students' attitudes toward learning and to give them a sense of shared responsibility in the process of their education. The Policy Council, the school's governing body, composed of students, teachers, and parents, provides the opportunity for students to participate in decisions about their education. HSC works toward three basic goals: building students' skills, increasing students' motivation to learn, and encouraging students to become responsible, independent members of society.

HSC offers a full academic program, and the curriculum emphasizes traditional major subject areas (English, math, science, social studies, foreign languages). The organization of the school day and year, however, is far from traditional. The focus of the student's day is a four-period "block class," which meets five days a week, for one nine-week quarter. Block classes are often team-taught and inter-disciplinary. The block configuration allows students to concentrate their attention and gives teachers more flexibility in planning lectures, projects, and special activities and an opportunity to get to know students well. In addition, each student takes two one-hour courses, which meet daily and extend over a period of a quarter, a semester, or a year. The extensive course list includes more than 80 choices for study.

HSC emphasized learning through experience. Students are encouraged to develop problem-solving skills, to participate actively in class, and to learn individual responsibility through regular homework and out-of-class projects.

All staff members take an active counseling role: Each acts as an advisor to 15-20 students, helping them select courses, following their progress, staying in contact with their parents, and acting as an advocate in disciplinary cases. To ease adjustment to the school, all new students take a one-quarter course called "Family Group" which introduces them to the school, gives them a structured setting for getting to know other students, and offers a forum for discussing thoughts, ideas and problems. In Family, students talk with people of different racial and ethnic groups, different social and economic backgrounds, and different personal styles.

HSC does not give letter grades. Students receive descriptive evaluations of work accomplished and suggestions for improvement. At weekly staff meetings, classroom and guidance teachers identify attendance, discipline, and academic problems early and develop a coordinated way of dealing with any students having difficulty.

No single teaching approach is required. A general atmosphere of high student involvement, innovation, teacher support, and student-to-student affiliation has emerged.

HSC consistently compares favorably with other high schools in both cognitive and affective areas. The greatest gains have been made in students' reading skills and attitudes toward school.

Youth Operated School-Based Development Enterprises - Brooks County, Georgia

In concept, the school-based development enterprise functions both as a catalyst and an implementing agency for a broad range of changes in education and community development. It provides a logical process for integrating schools into the economic development of their communities. Under the sponsorship of a school district, the enterprise, which may function as a corporation working for the community as a whole, provides vocational and career training for high school students. Its functions are to:

- own and operate businesses or provide services to other productive enterprises in a local community, primarily using students supervised by the school faculty;
- generate or attract income-producing opportunities to the community;
- serve as a coordinator of local development efforts;
- train young people in entrepreneurial skills; and
- stimulate the development of community social services that respond to local needs, interests, and circumstances.

As put into practice in Brooks County, Georgia, the program has three components:

1. child development center - provides parents with a licensed day care facility for their children, teaches necessary skills to students which will enable them to obtain a day care aide license, and teaches students parenting skills;
2. construction operation - built the facilities for the other two enterprises and now provides other building services to the community; and
3. swine breeding farm - provides a contemporary learning center including computerization through which swine management can be taught in the vocational agriculture program, supplies feeder pigs to local farmers for the commercial market, and serves as a model for farmers.

Each of these enterprises, begun after a study of community needs, provides services to the community and educational opportunities to high school students. Students learn - and earn - by doing. Through youth-operated businesses, students become integrally involved in the community economic development process.

Note: The concept of school-based community development corporations was first presented in Education in Rural America: A Reassessment of Conventional Wisdom, Jonathan P. Sher, editor. The concept is in practice in a number of other communities in Georgia and elsewhere, designed in each case to meet that particular community's needs.

PROJECT COFFEE - Oxford, Massachusetts

Project COFFEE (Cooperative Federation for Educational Experiences) is a comprehensive instructional, occupational, training, and counseling program for adolescents with histories of academic failure, truancy, poor self-concept, family problems, misconduct, and juvenile court involvement. The program integrates four components: 1) an academic component which provides relevant basic skills instruction; 2) an occupational component which provides hands-on educational experience in a realistic high technology work setting while reinforcing basic skills; 3) a counseling component which provides occupational and emotional support utilizing state, regional, and local service organizations; and 4) a recreation component which features a program of activities adapted to enable students to develop a sense of personal accomplishment and group cooperation.

Project COFFEE is a cooperative program of the Oxford, Massachusetts schools and thirteen surrounding school districts. It effectively combines funding from a number of sources including special education, vocational education, Job Training Partnership Act funds, and local human services agencies, to serve students. Project COFFEE has an advisory group composed of community agency and business representatives, parents, and former students. The program functions well as a school within a school.

Each occupational project within Project COFFEE features job entry skills, job placement skills, shadowing experiences, and a related work-study program. Occupational components include electronic assembly, data processing, building and grounds maintenance, horticulture/agriculture, and distributive education. Making occupational experiences relevant to the local job market is critical to the success of the program. In fact, the true partnership that has developed with area businesses and industries is a major key to the effectiveness of the program.

Project COFFEE seeks to have a wholistic approach toward potential dropouts. Learning is individualized and self-paced. A student contract is used to bring about positive changes in student behavior. Extensive staff development is critical to the success of this approach.

Students may be referred to Project COFFEE as early as the eighth grade. The average length of stay is two years. Presently, 115 students referred by the participating school systems are being served in the program. As stated by Project COFFEE, "[s]tudents stayed in the program. Absenteeism, vandalism and discipline problems declined, while language, reading and math ability improved."

Prcject Intercept - Ossining, New York

Project Intercept is designed to be a positive alternative to pupil suspensions, truancy, and dropping out in the Ossining, New York schools. It is a comprehensive intervention program designed to have an impact on academic and social dynamics and to alter classroom learning and interpersonal behavior. There are four distinct but interrelated project components: staff in-service training, alternative academic programs to meet the needs of high-risk dropout, suspension, and truant students, student social and interpersonal skill training and family intervention and parental training.

In-service training is seen as critical to the project's success. Teachers from throughout the comprehensive high school volunteered to attend workshops where they studied curriculum, teaching strategies, discipline techniques, classroom management procedures, learning disabilities, group dynamics, social learning theory, behavior modification, counseling methods, and family dynamics and intervention. Peer critiquing offers teachers peer support and guidance in the introduction of the project's techniques into the classroom.

Two alternative programs have been established to serve the high-risk secondary school students. Each program is a school within a school and serves a specific population.

1. Learning Center - Most of the students in the Learning Center have already dropped out. The program is highly structured but differs from the traditional academic programs in its individualized approach to learning, its small class size, and its involvement of the total family in helping to change a student's behavior. Courses are offered in English, social studies, math, science, health, psychology, business education, and gym.

2. COPE (Change of Pace Education) - COPE serves students who have a high suspension and class-cutting rate and are not functioning well in large traditional classrooms. COPE students typically use this program as a transition class for one or two years before re-entering the mainstream of the high school. The students learn academic and behavior skills to compensate for learning deficiences which have contributed to a high failure rate in the traditional classroom.

A group counseling course called Family for students in the alternative programs is designed to teach, evaluate social skills, and help change their interpersonal behavior. Students are taught positive methods of relating to their peers, teachers, and parents. Peer counseling and peer support are integral to the program. Activities such as field trips are planned and carried out throughout the year to strengthen group skills.

Family intervention and parental training workshops for parental education are offered throughout the year. Topics include providing an understanding of how adolescents perceive themselves and their families, behavior modification procedures, active listening, and how to improve family communication patterns. Students learn that there is a home-community-school intervention strategy to help them stay in school.

Recognizing that the problems facing high-risk students often begin much earlier than high school, school officials are seeking to intervene at an earlier age. An eighth-grade component has been added, and efforts to work with younger students are in plans for the future.

Since Project Intercept's inception, the dropout rate of the entire high school has declined by over 50% and the suspension rate by over 70%. For students in the alternative programs, there has been a significant increase in school attendance and competency-based skills and a significant decrease in suspensions and failures.

Cities in Schools - Houston, Texas

Cities in Schools (CIS) is a private, non-profit organization which is a multi-service, multi-sponsored program designed to prevent students from dropping out of school or participating in delinquent acts. CIS serves students and their families by coordinating the efforts of public education institutions, social service organizations and corporations at local schools. CIS program activities are based on the premise that a lack of coordination among institutions and agencies in urban communities hinders the optimum delivery of needed human services to students and their families. CIS program services focus on maximizing the individual student's need for physical health, mental health, social services, enrichment, employment, instruction and parental involvement.

Referrals to the program are made by parents, teachers, principals, counselors and social workers. Students referred to CIS have presented one or more indications of counterproductive behavior. A school problem leads to a home visit and an interagency, multi-disciplinary staff determination of how the student and family needs may best be met. Some students and families receive ongoing services while others receive referrals to other agencies.

Cities in Schools operates at all grade levels at a number of schools within the Houston Independent School District. Services offered are dependent upon individual needs. Social services needs tend to be the most frequent at the elementary level, while counseling is a focus in middle school, and job training and summer employment are high priorities of the high school program.

The uniqueness of Cities in Schools is that staff members are repositioned personnel from numerous social service agencies already serving inner-city communities in Houston. The repositioned staff members perform agency tasks at the school site. Having an "office" at the schools allows the agency to identify individual and family needs soon after they are manifested, and in many cases, before they become problematic. Agencies which are participating in Cities in Schools include Mental-Health Retardation Authority, Houston Child Guidance, Parks and Recreation, Health Department, Juvenile Probation, Houston Independent School District, Wesley Community Center, Department of Human Resources and the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. In addition to these repositioned staff, the University of Texas Medical School, through its Adolescent Clinic Program, sends interns to one of the CIS project sites on a regular basis to provide physical exams, on-going medical care and referrals to other specialty areas as needed. These medical services are provided at no cost to CIS students/families.

Active support and participation from the private sector is a key element of the Cities in Schools program. By offering financial assistance, job placements, and other services, and in return helping to develop a well-prepared work force, business enters a partnership with the schools.

The program's philosophy is that to help a student stay in school, a program must reach the total person with help for his or her own unique set of problems. As described by Houston's superintendent of schools, "In my thirty years as an administrator, I've never seen anything serve as a catalytic agent as fast as Cities in Schools. It's a result oriented mechanism. In Houston it has produced results faster than any program we've tried - and we've tried many."

Note: Cities in Schools is a private, non-profit organization of national scope with headquarters in Washington, D.C. The program is based on the premise that the lack of coordination among institutions and agencies in urban communities hinders optimum effectiveness and efficiency in the delivery of human services. CIS brings together local, state, and federal government agencies, as well as private organizations, corporate enterprises, and the educational institutions in the community for the benefit of these who most need these services. The program operates in a number of cities across the country, of which Houston is one.